

Sword of Truth

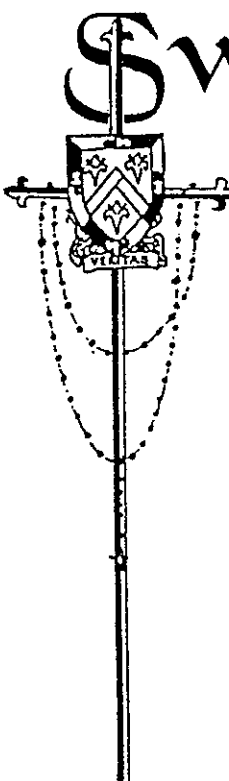
No. 16 Spring 2003

A Rosary Confraternity Publication

Timeless words of wisdom:

The Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII: *Magnae Dei Matris* - September 8, 1892

THE ROSARY: A REMEDY FOR THE CORRUPTION OF THE WORLD



It is only too plain how many and of what nature are the corrupting agencies by which the wickedness of the world deceitfully strives to weaken and completely uproot from souls their Christian faith and the respect for God's law on which faith is fed and depends for its effectiveness. Already the fields cultivated by Our Lord are everywhere turning into a wilderness abounding in ignorance of the faith, in error and vice, as though blown upon by some hideous pest. And to add to the anguish of this thought, so far from putting a check on such insolent and destructive depravity, or imposing on them the punishment they deserve, the powers that can and should do it seem in many cases, by their indifference or open connivance, to increase the spirit of evil. We have good reason to deplore the public institutions in which the teaching of the sciences and arts is purposely so organized that the name of God is passed over in silence or visited with vituperation; to deplore the licence - growing more shameless by the day - of the press in publishing whatever it pleases, and the licence of speech in addressing any kind of insult to Christ our God and His Church. And we deplore no less the consequent laxity and apathy in the practice of the Catholic religion which, if not quite open apostasy from the faith, is certainly going to prove an easy road to it, since it is a manner of life having nothing in common with faith. Nobody who ponders this disorder and the surrender of the most fundamental principles will be astonished if afflicted nations everywhere are groaning under the heavy hand of God's vengeance and stand anxious and trembling in fear of worse calamities.

Now, to appease the might of an outraged God and to bring that health of soul so needed by those who are sorely afflicted, there is nothing better than devout and persevering prayer, provided it be joined with a love for and practice of Christian life. And both of these, the spirit of prayer and the practice of Christian life, are best attained through the devotion of the Rosary of Mary.

THE ORIGIN OF THE ROSARY THE KEY TO ITS VALUE

The well-known origin of the Rosary, illustrated in celebrated monuments of which we have made frequent mention, bears witness to its remarkable efficacy. For, in the days when the Albigensian sect, posing as the champion of pure faith and morals, but in reality introducing the worst kind of anarchy and corruption, brought many a nation to its utter ruin, the Church fought against it and the other infamous factions associated with it, not with troops and arms, but chiefly with the power of the most holy Rosary, the rite of which the Mother of God taught to our Father Dominic in order that he might propagate it. By this means the Church triumphed magnificently over every obstacle and provided for the salvation of her children, not only in that trial but in others like it afterward, always with the same glorious success. For this reason, now, when human affairs have taken the course which we deplore, bringing affliction to the Church and ruin to the State, all of us have the duty to unite our voice in prayer, with like devotion, to the Holy Mother of God, beseeching her that we too may rejoice, as we ardently desire, in experiencing the same power of her Rosary.

THE ROSARY: A PRAYER TO THE MOTHER OF MERCY

When we have recourse to Mary in prayer, we are having recourse to the Mother of Mercy, who is so well disposed toward us that, whatever the necessity that presses upon us, especially in attaining eternal life, she is instantly at our side of her own accord, even though she has not been invoked; and dispenses grace with a generous

hand from that treasure with which from the beginning she was divinely endowed in fullest abundance that she might be worthy to be the Mother of God. By the fullness of grace which confers on her the most illustrious of her many titles, the Blessed Virgin is infinitely superior to all the hierarchies of men and angels, the one creature who is closest of all to Christ. "It is a great thing in any saint to have grace sufficient for the salvation of many souls; but to have enough to suffice for the salvation of everybody in the world, is the greatest of all." (St. Thomas Aquinas)

It is impossible to say how pleasing and gratifying to her it is when we greet her with the Angelic Salutation, "full of grace"; and in repeating it, fashion these words of praise into ritual crowns for her. For every time we say them, we conjure up the memory of her exalted dignity and of the Redemption of the human race which God began through her; and bring to mind, too the divine and everlasting bond which links her with the joys and sorrows, the humiliations and triumphs, of Christ in directing and helping mankind to eternal life. It pleased Christ to take upon Himself our likeness, to call Himself the Son of Man, and to become thereby our Brother. in order that His mercy to us might be shown most openly; for "it behooved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest before God." Likewise because Mary was chosen to be the Mother of Christ, our Lord and our Brother, the unique prerogative was given her above all other mothers to show her mercy to us and to pour it out upon us. Besides, as we are indebted to Christ for sharing in some way with us the right, which is peculiarly His own, of calling God our Father and possessing Him as such, we are in like manner indebted to Him for His loving generosity in sharing with us the right to call Mary our Mother and to cherish her as such.

While nature itself made the name of mother the sweetest of all names and has made motherhood the very model of tender and foresighted love, no tongue is eloquent enough to put in words what every devout soul feels, namely, how intense is the flame of affectional and active charity which burns in Mary, in her who is truly our mother not in human way but through Christ. Nobody knows and comprehends so well as she everything that concerns us: what helps we need in life; what dangers, public or private, threaten our welfare; what difficulties and evils surround us; above all, how fierce is the fight we wage with the fiercest enemies of our salvation. In these and in all other troubles of life her power is most far-reaching, her desire to use it most ardent to bring consolation, strength, help of every kind to children who are dear to her. Accordingly, let us approach Mary boldly, wholeheartedly beseeching her by the bonds of her motherhood which unite her so closely to Jesus and at the same time to us; let us with deepest devotion invoke her constant aid in the prayer which she herself has indicated and which is most acceptable to her; then with good reason shall we rest with an easy and joyous mind under the protection of the best of mothers.



ROSARY CONFRATERNITY PRAYER

Queen of the Most Holy Rosary and Mother of us all, we come to you for help in our sorrows, trials, and necessities. Original sin has left us helpless and weak, but Divine Grace from your Divine Son heals and strengthens.

We pray especially for the members of the Rosary Confraternity whom we love. Help them wherever they may be; guide them, watch over them and make them strong in their trials and suffering. We are drawn together by a common bond of great love for you and for each other. Keep us faithful to your Son and to your Rosary until death.

We ask for the grace to love Jesus as you loved Him; to believe as you believed, to hope as you hoped; we ask to share your purity of mind and heart. Give us true sorrow for sin; make us love people as you and Jesus loved them. Obtain for us the gifts of the Holy Spirit, to be wise with your wisdom, to understand with your understanding, to know with your knowledge; to be prudent with your prudence, to be patient with your patience; to be courageous with your fortitude and ardently to desire justice for everyone with the all consuming desire of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ.

Intercede for the souls in purgatory, especially for members of the Rosary Confraternity. May they rest in peace. Finally we ask for the grace of final perseverance for ourselves and our loved ones that we may all be reunited in heaven forever.

St. Dominic, you who found grace and strength in the Rosary, pray for us.

The Secret of the Rosary by St. Louis Marie de Montfort

Thirty-Ninth Rose: A Parish Transformed

A Danish priest used to love to tell how the very same improvement that the Spanish Bishop noticed in his diocese had occurred in his own parish. He always told his story with great rejoicing of soul because it gave such glory to Almighty God. He said:

“I had preached as compellingly as I could, touching on many aspects of our Holy Faith, and using every argument I could possibly think of to get the people to amend their way of life. But in spite of all my efforts they went unconcernedly about their way as before; and it was then that I decided to preach the Holy Rosary.

“I told my congregation how precious it is and I taught them how to say it. I kept on preaching the Holy Rosary and the devotion took root in the parish. Six months later I was overjoyed to see that people had really changed for the better. How true it is that this God-given prayer has divine power — the power to touch our hearts and to fill them with horror of sin and the love of virtue!”

One day Our Lady said to Blessed Alan: “Just as Almighty God chose the Angelic Salutation to bring about the Incarnation of His Word and the Redemption of mankind, in the same way those who want to bring about moral reforms and who want people reborn in Jesus Christ must honor me and greet me with the same salutation. I am the channel by which God came to men, and so, next to my Son Jesus Christ, it is through me that men must obtain grace and virtue.”

I who write this have learned from my own experience that the Rosary has the power to convert even the most hardened hearts. I have known people who have gone to missions and who have heard sermons on the most terrifying subjects without being in the least moved; and yet after they had, on my advice, started to say the Rosary every day they eventually became converted and gave themselves completely to God.

When I have gone back again to visit parishes where I have given missions I have seen a tremendous difference in them; in those parishes where people had given up the Rosary they had generally fallen back into their sinful ways again, whereas in places where the Rosary was said faithfully I found the people were persevering in the grace of God and were advancing each day in virtue.

Taken from *True Devotion to Mary* by St. Louis Marie de Montfort

It is very difficult, considering our weakness and frailty, to preserve in ourselves the graces and treasures which we have received from God ...because the devils, who are skillful thieves, wish to surprise us unawares, and to strip us. They watch day and night for the favorable moment. For that end they go round about us incessantly to devour us and to snatch from us in one moment, by a sin, all the graces and merits we have gained for many years. Their malice, their experience, their stratagems and their number ought to make us fear this misfortune immensely, especially when we see how many persons fuller of grace than we are, richer in virtues, better founded in experience and far higher exalted in sanctity, have been surprised, robbed and unhappily pillaged. Ah! How many cedars of Lebanon, how many stars of the firmament, have we not seen fall miserably, and in the twinkling of an eye lose all their height and brightness! Whence comes that sad and curious change? It was not want of grace, which is wanting to no man; but it was for want of humility. They thought themselves capable of guarding their own treasures. They trusted in themselves, relied upon themselves. They thought their house secure enough, and their coffers strong enough, to keep the precious treasure of grace. It is because of that scarcely perceptible reliance upon themselves, though all the while it seemed to them that they were relying only on the grace of God, that the most just Lord permitted them to be robbed by leaving them to themselves. Alas! if they had but known the admirable devotion which I will unfold presently, they would have confided their treasure to a Virgin powerful and faithful, who would have kept it for them as if it had been her own possession; may, who would have even taken it as an obligation of justice on herself to preserve it for them.

It is difficult to persevere in justice because of the strange corruption of the world. The world is now so corrupt it seems inevitable that religious hearts should be soiled, if not by its mud, at least by its dust; so that it has become a kind of miracle for anyone to remain in the midst of that impetuous torrent without being drawn in by it, in the midst of that stormy sea without being drowned in it or stripped by the pirates and the corsairs, in the midst of that pestilent air without being infected by it. It is the Virgin, alone faithful, in whom the serpent has never had a part, who works this miracle for those who serve her in that sweet way which I have shortly to unfold... [The Consecration to Jesus through Mary, ... “a way of holiness that is short, easy, secure and perfect.”]

Anyone wishing more information on St. Louis de Montfort's “True Devotion to Mary” and the Consecration to Jesus through Mary, please send your name and address to the Confraternity.